THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • MARCH 03, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

LONDON, PARIS, KYIV TO WORK ON CEASEFIRE PLAN FOR UKRAINE WAR

The three countries will present the new ceasefire plan to the United States, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Sunday

STARMER STRESSES RESTORING PEACE TALKS

The European leaders are in London to discuss ending the war. The meeting has been overshadowed by the extraordinary scolding of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy by Donald Trump, who lambasted him on Friday. Starmer said he is currently focused on being a bridge to restore peace talks, rather than "ramp up the rhetoric"

'EUROPEAN FORCE TO BE SENT TO UKRAINE'

- Sunday's summit is likely to include talks on establishing a European military force to be sent to Ukraine to underpin a ceasefire. Starmer said it would involve "a coalition of the willing" | **P9**
- Next steps: Arming Ukrainians, including a European element to guarantee security and providing a "US backstop" to check Putin

€200 bn

LIKELY TO BE RELEASED BY EU TO FUND UKRAINE'S EFFORTS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Spl court orders FIR against Buch

Anti-Corruption Bureau told to book ex-Sebi chief, 5 others for alleged stock market fraud

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI & BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @Mumbai

A day after Madhabi Puri Buch demitted office as the chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), a special court here directed registration of an FIR against her and five others in connection with alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations.

The order was passed by special judge Shashikant Eknathrao Bangar on Saturday on a petition filed by Thane-based journalist Sapan Shrivastava. Seeking a court-monitored investigation, the petitioner alleged large-scale financial fraud, corruption, and regulatory violations in the listing of a company.

The court said prime-facie it shows there have been violations and there are documents to support the same; therefore, the Anti Corruption Bureau should file an FIR against the accused, it ordered.

Apart from Buch, the officials against whom the court has ordered registration of the FIR are three whole-time members of Sebi—Ashwani Bhatia, Ananth Narayan G, and Kamlesh Chandra Varshney—BSE chief executive Sundararaman Ramamurthy and former BSE chairman Pramod Agarwal.

Responding to the court order, Sebi said it will challenge the it. In a statement issued on Sunday, the markets regulator said it was not given a chance to represent itself and that none of the officials named in the petition was in their current positions when the alleged misdeeds happened.

Terming the complaint 'frivolous', Sebi alleged that the petitioner is known for filing such petitions in the past. "The applicant is known to be a frivolous and habitual litigant, with previous applications being dismissed by the Court, with imposition of costs in some cases," it said.

Echoing similar views, the BSE said: "The application is frivolous and vexatious in nature," adding that the court has not issued any notice or granted any opportunity to place the facts on record.

In a late-evening statement, the BSE said the company in question is Cals Refineries, listed in 1994, and the officials named in the application were not in their respective positions at the time of listing and were not connected with the company at all.

"BSE is initiating necessary and appropriate legal steps in this regard," it added.

There is prima facie evidence of regulatory lapses and collusion, requiring a fair and impartial probe
Special judge S E Bangar
The complaint
Sebi, BSE officials allegedly allowed listing of a firm that failed to meet regulatory norms, leading to market manipulation and loss for investors
Court to monitor
Court sees cognisable offence, to monitor the investigation & has sought status report within 30 days

No rift among Cong leaders in Kerala, says Rahul Gandhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday sought to dispel the notion there is a rift among the party's leaders in Kerala following its MP Shashi Tharoor's recent remarks praising the achievements of CPM-led government in the state, saying they stand united.

His comment came in the wake of a meeting between the Congress' central leadership and the party's leaders from Kerala at Indira Bhawan on Friday to discuss the strategy and the way forward ahead of next year's assembly polls.

Following Tharoor's remarks, the Congress brass issued a warning that strong action will be taken against those making comments that go against the party's interests.

Posting a picture of the Kerala leaders' interaction with the media after the meeting on Facebook, Rahul wrote: "They stand as one, united by the light of purpose ahead." His post was accompanied by the hashtag Team Kerala.

The three-hour meeting at the Congress's Indira Bhawan headquarters on Friday had discipline, unity and the strengthening of the state organisation as its running theme.

Sources said Gandhi asked leaders present at the meeting to be very careful and not to do or say anything that does not toe the party line.

In the meeting, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge laid stress on discipline, ensuring unity and filling up vacant posts to strengthen the party's Kerala unit.

THAROOR U-TURN ON KERALA STORY

Days after his praise of the growth of Kerala's startup ecosystem, Shashi Tharoor has taken a U-turn, saying the growth of startups should not remain "confined to paper" alone | **P5**

NEP ROW

Two-language policy will be in interest of Kannada: Min

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Shivamogga

SCHOOL Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa said here on Sunday that the two-language policy is a technical issue, but the government will take all necessary measures to uphold Kannada in the state.

He was responding to a question on a demand from a section of society to implement the two-language policy in the state on the lines of Tamil Nadu. He said that some students who come to Karnataka from other states and enrol for Class 8 cannot be forced to learn Kannada as they would have never studied the language before.

"They will face hardships if we make Kannada compulsory for them. We must ensure a conducive environment for them to learn the language. This is a technical issue. Whatever the decision we take will be in the interest of the Kannada language," he said.

"As the State Education Policy is being enforced, we will ensure that any decision regarding language is taken carefully," he said.

ECI allays concern over duplicate voter ID numbers

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) has moved to calm concerns over duplicate voter ID numbers, clarifying that identical EPIC numbers don't indicate fake voters. The issue came to light after several social media posts flagged the issue and claimed that electors in different states were being assigned similar EPIC numbers. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had also raised similar concerns.

In its response, ECI said while some electors may share the same elector photo identity card (EPIC) number, their demographic details, assembly constituency, and polling booth information differ, and that they can only cast their votes at their designated polling stations in their respective constituencies. The duplicate EPIC numbers were caused by a decentralized and manual mechanism used before the electoral roll database was shifted to the ERONET platform. "This resulted in certain State/UT CEO offices using the same EPIC alphanumeric series and leaving a scope for the possibility of duplicate EPIC numbers being allotted to electors in different constituencies in different states," ECI said.

To address this, the commission has said it will assign unique EPIC numbers to registered electors, ensuring that any cases of duplicate EPIC numbers are rectified.

U'KHAND AVALANCHE TOLL RISES TO 8, RESCUE ACT OVER

Rescuers on the job in Chamoli district on Sunday | EXPRESS

NARENDRA SETHI @Dehradun

THE bodies of the last four trapped labourers were pulled out from the site of the avalanche-hit Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp in Chamoli on Sunday, taking the death toll to eight as authorities ended the nearly 60-hour rescue operation.

Army doctors said 46 workers who were rescued on Saturday have been brought to the military hospital in Jyotirmath. Two of them have been referred to AIIMS, Rishikesh. Three of the workers are in critical condition.

The body of the last missing worker has also been retrieved, said Army PRO Lt Col Manish Shrivastava.

The avalanche hit the BRO camp between Mana and Badrinath on Friday, burying the 54 workers inside eight containers and a shed. Earlier, it was believed that the total number of trapped labourers was 55 but one of them was on unauthorised leave and had reached home safely.

More than 200 personnel from the disaster management authority, ITBP, BRO, NDRF, SDRF, IAF, district administration, health department and fire brigade were engaged in the rescue operation. Located three kilometres from Badrinath, Mana is the last village on the India-Tibet border at a height of 3,200 metres.

Among the deceased are four from Uttar Pradesh: Jitendra Singh, Manjeet Yadav, Alok Yadav, and Ashok Paswan; two from Himachal Pradesh: Mahender Pal and Ramesh Chand; and two from Uttarakhand: Anil Kumar and Arvind Kumar Singh.

Dhami condoles deaths

Dehradun: Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed grief at the death of eight workers in the avalanche in Chamoli district

DIG Vartika files plaint against IGP Roopa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

INTERNAL Security Division (ISD) Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Administration, Vartika Katiyar, has alleged that ISD Inspector General of Police (IGP)–Operations, Roopa D, conspired against her and illegally took photographs of documents in her office chamber using low-ranking officers.

Vartika filed a complaint with Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh on February 20. She alleged that on September 6, 2024, Head Constable Manjunath and Home Guard Mallikarjun, acting on Roopa's orders, entered her chamber without permission.

Mallikarjun took the key from the control room and opened the chamber, while Manjunath took photographs of the files, and sent them to the IGP via WhatsApp.

Vartika's personal assistant Kiran Kumar H had instructed Manjunath not to open the chamber without the DIG's knowledge. However, Manjunath, acting on IGP's orders, took photos of the files.

The DIG said she only recently became aware of this issue. Learning about it, she questioned Kiran, Manjunath and Mallikarjun, and they admitted to opening her chamber without authorisation and accessing the files on the instructions of Roopa. She stated that her chamber contains confidential documents and official records.

CONTINUED ON: P3

UNBEATEN INDIA MARCH ON

MEN IN BLUE BEAT NEW ZEALAND BY 44 RUNS TO FINISH ON TOP OF GROUP A ON SUNDAY. A LOOK...

Varun Chakravarthy (L) celebrates a wicket on Sunday | AP

VARUN TAKES FIFER

In what was his first game of the tournament, Varun Chakravarthy took five wickets for 42 runs and in the process helped India defend the target of 250. On the slowish Dubai surface, the spinner from TN rattled thje New Zealand middle-order to ensure India remain unbeaten.

PROTEAS FACE BLACK CAPS TEST

With the loss against India, New Zealand finished second in Group A. They will be flying to Pakistan, along with South Africa who topped the Group B, where the two teams play the second semifinal in Lahore on Wednesday.

SEMIFINAL LINE-UP

INDIA VS AUSTRALIA, DUBAI, TUESDAY

SOUTH AFRICA VS NEW ZEALAND, LAHORE, WEDNESDAY

AT LONG LAST

Heat is on, don't step out from noon to 3: Health dept

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WITH temperatures soaring across Karnataka, the state Health Department has issued a heatwave advisory, urging people to take precautions, especially between 12 noon and 3 pm, when the risk of heat-related illnesses is the highest.

The department emphasised that people should stay hydrated, covered and indoors whenever possible. It also stressed on a first-aid response plan for heat-related emergencies at work places.

The advisory suggested drinking water frequently, even if not thirsty, as thirst is not a reliable indicator of dehydration. It emphasised steps like carrying drinking water when travelling, consuming oral rehydration solution (ORS) or homemade drinks like lemon water, buttermilk or fruit juices with added salt and water-rich foods such as watermelon, muskmelon, oranges, grapes, cucumbers and lettuce.

To reduce the risk of heatstroke, the department suggested limiting outdoor activities to early mornings or evenings when temperatures are lower. "Avoid difficult activities between 12 noon and 3 pm. If outdoor work is necessary, reschedule it to before 11 am or after 4 pm. For unavoidable outdoor events, set up shaded areas, ensure air circulation and arrange drinking water facilities," it mentioned.

WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?: P5

After 78 yrs, it's freedom from darkness for Palar hadi tribals

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

IT is celebration time at Palar hadi along the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu as the tribal settlement with 75 houses that lived in darkness with kerosene lamps and torch lights for decades has finally got electricity supply.

The hadi, one of forest brigand Veerappan's hideouts and situated on the banks of the Palar River, had not got power all these years as the forest department had objected to erecting poles or drawing power lines fearing it would threaten wildlife as the region has a high movement of elephants, sambar, deer and other animals. The families had to buy kerosene in the black market at nearby Govindapadi and Kolathur village in Salem district or Gopinatham, the brigand's village.

"Madappa (Lord Mahadeshwara) has been kind this Shivarathri as the village has electricity supply. Our children and fellow villagers are happy, hoping that the electric bulbs will be lit anytime and we can say goodbye to kerosene lanterns," said Madamma, a tribal.

A tribal woman thanks Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa for power supply to her hamlet | EXPRESS

Another villager, Murgesh, skipped work to attend the event to commission power supply. He said they want the panchayat to erect streetlights to protect them from elephants which visit their hadi almost every day.

He said their relatives and friends from many tribal villages have congregated at the hadi to celebrate.

The area has 22 tribal villages that are in darkness and don't have basic facilities like power supply, roads and drinking water. The Chamundeshwari Electric Supply Company (CESCOM) took up the initiative in December last year to provide power supply at a cost of Rs 41 crore.

CESCOM former managing director G Sheela said they managed to convince forest authorities to lay underground power cables to all the 75 villages.

EXPRESS READ

15-day K'taka budget session starts today

Bengaluru: The 15-day budget session will commence from Monday with CM Siddaramaiah presenting his 16th budget on March 7. The session is likely to be turbulent with the opposition BJP and JDS trying to attack the government over the state's finances | **P4**

Private lunar lander aces moon touchdown

Cape Canaveral (US): A private lunar lander carrying a drill, vacuum and other experiments for NASA touched down on the moon on Sunday. Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lander descended from lunar orbit on autopilot, aiming for the slopes of an ancient volcanic dome.